

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-6 and 22-27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Rice (U.S. Patent No. 5,569,515) in view of D'Anna (U.S. Patent No. 5,492,733). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present application is directed to a coil of stamps formed from a plurality of self-adhesive stamps detachably connected to each other end-to-end to form a continuous strip of stamps. The strip is wound about itself in spiral-like fashion, and includes an inner end and an outer end. The strip of stamps includes a portion adjacent to the inner end of the strip having a piece of liner material disposed thereon, and a portion having no liner material thereon, whereby the portion having no liner material thereon allows the strip to be wound directly onto itself.

Each of the plurality of self-adhesive stamps comprises a paper layer having a first surface and an opposing second surface, a pressure sensitive adhesive layer adhered to the first surface of the paper layer, an ink layer disposed on at least portions of the second surface of the paper layer, a primer layer disposed on the ink layer and on any portions of the second surface of the paper layer not having the ink layer disposed thereon, and a silicone layer

disposed on the primer layer. The primer layer is preferably at least partially absorbed by any portions of the second surface of the paper layer upon which the primer layer is disposed, whereby the paper layer is sealed, and preferably substantially none of the silicone layer is absorbed by the paper layer.

With such a configuration, when the silicone layer is applied, not only does the silicone create a discrete layer on top of the areas of the ink layer, but it also creates a discrete layer on top of the areas of the paper layer. This is caused by the primer layer having sealed the paper layer such that substantially no silicone is absorbed therein. As such, when one stamp is placed on top of another, the adhesive layer of the top stamp does not directly contact the paper layer of the lower stamp. Instead, the adhesive layer of the top stamp contacts only the silicone layer of the bottom stamp. As the adhesive does not readily tightly adhere to the silicone layer, the top stamp may be readily and conveniently unrolled from the coil of stamps.

To this end, Claims 1, 6, 22 and 27, all rejected independent claims, each require, at least the following elements: (1) a paper layer having an adhesive layer adhered to a first surface thereof and an ink layer disposed on at least portions of an opposing second surface thereof; (2) a primer layer disposed on the second surface of the paper layer (i.e., on the ink side opposite the adhesive layer); and

(3) a silicone layer disposed on the primer layer. These required limitations are not disclosed, taught or suggested by Rice or D'Anna, either alone or in combination.

Rice discloses a linerless pressure sensitive adhesive label comprising a substrate, a pressure sensitive adhesive layer coated onto at least a portion of one side of the substrate, and a continuous protective layer of polyethylene or amide wax substantially overcoating the pressure sensitive adhesive, thereby masking the tackiness of the substrate. Before the label can be used, the protective layer must be at least partially removed to thereby expose the pressure sensitive adhesive and allow for the subsequent affixing of the label to a surface. The removal of the protective coating can be by a mechanical, chemical or electrochemical means. Specifically, the protective coating can be removed by, for example, U.V. light, ultrasound, corona discharge, or knurled roller. Thus, there is absolutely no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Rice of a primer layer and/or a silicone layer disposed on the surface of the substrate opposite the adhesive layer, as is required by all rejected claims.

Moreover, it would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art to modify Rice to satisfy the above limitations, and in fact Rice repeatedly and expressly

teaches away from such a modification. Rice, being directed to a label (and not a postage stamp) is primarily concerned with allowing for printing by the end user on the surface of the substrate opposite the adhesive, and Rice expressly recognizes that "the presence of a release coating on the side of the substrate opposite the adhesive hinders the ability to apply printed material to the substrate." (column 1, lines 39-41). Even more to the point, Rice explicitly states: "Preferably, the side of the substrate opposite the adhesive layer does not contain a release coating." (column 2, lines 23-24). Thus, one skilled in the art would clearly be taught against modifying Rice to include a release coating (i.e., a primer layer and/or a silicone layer) on the surface of the substrate opposite the adhesive layer, as is required by all rejected claims. Such a modification would be completely repugnant to the objects and teachings of Rice.

Neither does D'Anna disclose, teach or suggest the limitations set forth above. D'Anna simply discloses a high gloss ultraviolet curable coating having a particular configuration and particular properties. Although D'Anna does disclose that the coating may be used as a release liner (in addition to many other applications), there is no teaching as to the configuration of a label or stamp which could even arguably be said to anticipate or render obvious the limitations set forth above. Indeed, the Examiner merely cites D'Anna as a secondary reference in combination with Rice. However, as discussed in detail above, Rice repeatedly

and explicitly teaches that any "release liner" must be applied to the side of the substrate having the adhesive applied thereto. Thus, even if Rice and D'Anna were combined as suggested by the Examiner, the result would be a linerless label having a release liner formed from the coating of D'Anna applied to the side of the substrate bearing the adhesive layer. The resulting label would not include a primer layer and a silicone layer on the surface of the substrate opposite the adhesive layer, as is required by all rejected claims.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims, namely Claims 1-13 and 22-27, are patentable over the references of record, and earnestly solicit allowance of the same.

Respectfully submitted,



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